

**SPECIAL
TRANSPORTATION
SERVICE (STS)**

STS RIDER'S GUIDE

**Door-to-door
transportation for people
with disabilities who are
unable to use Metrobus,
Metrorail, or Metromover**



M I A M I - D A D E

T R A N S I T

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Welcome to STS

The information contained in this Special Transportation Service (STS) Rider's Guide has been developed to help new riders become acquainted with the STS Program and to provide the necessary guidelines required to use the service effectively.

What is STS?

STS is a shared-ride service of Miami-Dade County in compliance with the complementary paratransit service provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. STS can be used throughout most of urbanized Miami-Dade County, some parts of southern Broward County and to mile marker 50 in northern Monroe County. STS can be used for work, school, shopping, recreation, medical appointments, etc.

STS provides door-to-door transportation for people with disabilities who are unable to use Metrobus, Metrorail, or Metromover. Transportation can be provided from the main entrance of the place of origin to the main entrance of the destination. It is the rider's responsibility to be ready and waiting at the main entrance of the scheduled pickup location.

Miami-Dade has contracted with private transportation carriers to

provide STS service. The carriers use minivans, sedans, lift-equipped vans, and small buses to transport riders. A wheelchair rider who can safely and independently transfer to a sedan or taxi may be scheduled to ride as an ambulatory passenger.

Who may use STS?

- People with disabilities whose physical or mental disabilities prevent their use of accessible public transportation available to the general public.
- People with temporary disabilities who may be temporarily eligible for services during the period of disability.
- People with disabilities visiting from out of town who may be presumed eligible if they have been certified in another Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) jurisdiction or they can prove their disability.
- To register with STS, contact the Miami-Dade County STS Certification and Enrollment Office at 305-263-5406.

Where can I ride with STS?

The STS service area matches the public transportation system (bus and rail) and includes most of urbanized Miami-Dade County but excludes certain locations such as: the

Everglades National Park Visitors Center, Trail Glades Range, Miccosukee Indian Reservation Bingo Hall and the Tribal Center, Fisher Island, and south of mile marker 50.

The Miami-Dade County service area is based on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations which state that ADA-eligible persons who travel in areas that are within three quarters of a mile on each side of an existing fixed-route bus or rail service are entitled to STS service. The Miami-Dade Transit bus and rail systems cover most of urbanized Miami-Dade County with limited service into an irregular portion of southern Broward County and to mile marker 50 in northern Monroe County.

STS Rider's Rights & Responsibilities

Riders have the right to:

- Safe trips in air-conditioned vehicles.
- Drivers trained to meet riders' special transportation needs.
- Safe, clean, properly equipped, smoke-free vehicles.
- Correctly fastened seat belts and/or wheelchair tie-downs.
- Pickups within 10 minutes before to 20 minutes after the negotiated reservation time.

- Professional courteous treatment by and toward other passengers.
- Refuse unsafe service and file complaints without fear of reprisal.
- Prompt investigation and effective resolution of complaints.
- Current and complete program information.
- Assistance getting in and out of the vehicle and to the main entrance of the destination, if required. Drivers are not permitted to lift riders and cannot enter the building.
- Peace and quiet; drivers are not permitted to play audio equipment in the vehicle (2-way dispatch radio is necessary). Riders may play audio equipment if they use a personal headset.

Riders have a responsibility to:

- Be informed about program benefits and limitations.
- Schedule trip requests from 1-14 days in advance.
- Be ready and waiting at the main entrance. Drivers will announce their presence at the main entrance door but will not enter the building or call or search for riders.
- Remain in the pickup location from 10 minutes before the negotiated

time until 20 minutes after.

- Call in trip cancellations as soon as possible, but no later than one hour before scheduled pickup time.
- Have times, addresses, zip codes and other needed information ready when making a reservation.
- Present the correct fare. Drivers do not make change.
- Wear seat belts and check that wheelchair tie-downs are secured.
- Not to smoke, eat, or drink while in the vehicle.
- Be courteous to others and avoid distracting the driver.
- Keep wheelchairs or other mobility aids in good condition, including having a working wheelchair brake.
- Avoid littering the vehicle.
- Use headphones when playing radios, TV, CD players, etc.
- Expect shared-ride service equivalent to bus (not taxi) service. Travel time should be comparable to service provided by the transit system available to the general public including transfers (approximately 12 m.p.h.).
- Schedule a trip at least one hour before the drop-off time, taking the 30-minute service window, distance and rush hour traffic into

consideration.

- Allow sufficient time, at least 45 minutes, between scheduled drop-off and return time.
- Advise the call-taker of your appointment time. If you must arrive at a certain time for an appointment, allow the call taker to schedule your pickup time accordingly.

Drivers are not responsible for:

- Assisting riders to dress.
- Carrying riders or wheelchairs up/down flights of stairs.
- Providing wheelchairs or Personal Care Attendants (PCAs).
- Entering the building to search for a rider.
- Calling riders on cell phones or building intercoms.

Companions

One companion may ride with a certified passenger, providing both are picked up and dropped off at the same address. Certified riders may travel together but must always pay the fare when they travel and are not eligible to travel free of charge as a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) or companion.

Companions, including children, pay the same fare as the certified

passenger. Additional companions may ride provided there is room in the vehicle. Riders traveling with children three years or younger shall provide a child restraint (car seat) as required by law. Companions from age four or five must use either a car seat or lap and shoulder belt as required by law.

Be sure to advise the call-taker, at the time you make the reservation, if you are traveling with a companion and/or indicate if traveling with a child under five years of age.

Personal Care Attendant

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone designated or employed specifically to help the eligible individual meet his/her personal needs. You must indicate during the eligibility certification process if you will be traveling with a PCA. Persons with cognitive disabilities (Alzheimer's, dementia, organic brain syndrome, profound retardation, etc.) and children 12 years of age and younger should travel with a PCA. Remember that the STS driver is the same as a bus driver, and cannot function as a caretaker. Both the PCA and the certified rider must be picked up and dropped off at the same address. You must advise the call-taker, at the time you make your reservation, if you are traveling with a PCA. No fare is charged to the PCA,

but the certified rider must pay the standard fare.

Reservations: Telephone Numbers

Countywide service: 305-264-9000
TTY/TDD (for the hearing impaired):
305-265-9435.

Days and Hours

Monday - Sunday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
You may wish to call for your reservation on weekends or between noon and 2 p.m. on weekdays when the phone lines are less busy.

Pre-Scheduled and Same-Day Emergency

Reservations for STS service can be made from 1 to 14 days in advance of the expected travel date. Same-day service is not generally available but may be approved by the County or Contractor on an individual basis for non-life-threatening emergencies. Call 305-267-6305 or 305-264-7111 for assistance.

For life-threatening emergencies, call 911. During peak travel periods, it may be necessary for the call-taker to negotiate an earlier or later pickup and/or return time based on vehicle capacity and/or availability.

However, the call-taker will inform you of this change at the time you

place your reservation and cannot insist on a pickup time (at either end of the trip) that varies by more than one hour from the rider's desired travel time. Remember to allow ample travel time when placing your reservation, as there may be other riders with different pickup or drop-off points sharing the vehicle.

Information you should provide when making a reservation:

- Name, identification number, and telephone number.
- Exact street addresses, zip codes, and phone numbers of the locations where you will be picked up and/or dropped off, including the name of the building or apartment complex.
- Special pickup instructions, such as the door, entrance, exit, store, or building where you will be waiting at shopping centers, college campuses, large medical complexes or other confusing locations.
- The time you would like to arrive at your destination or your desired pickup time.
- Requested return time.
- Number of companions, PCAs and/or children traveling with you.

Subscription Reservations

You may request subscription service if you make the same trip at least once per week to work, school, religious service, medical appointments, etc. Once scheduled, subscription service is automatic and you do not need to place daily phone calls to schedule these trips except to cancel or make minor changes to a specific day of your subscription service.

To be approved for subscription service, the subscription must remain in effect for a minimum period of one month. Please cancel your subscription trip(s) for the day(s) or month(s) you will not be using it. To do so, please make it clear to the call-taker that you are canceling for a specific day(s) and not canceling the subscription trip permanently.

Subscription changes may require two days to process, so it is necessary to provide advance notice. It may take some time to anchor your subscription change on the best possible run, so try to avoid subscription changes whenever possible. Changes may temporarily disrupt your service quality until they are re-anchored on a run.

To request new subscription service, update an existing subscription (due to change in pickup or drop-off address,

time, phone number) or temporarily put your subscription service on hold, please call 305-265-3337 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Subscriptions are automatically cancelled on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. If you need service on any of these holidays, you must call reservations at 305-264-9000 at least one day in advance to schedule service.

Cancellations

For a same day cancellation of your subscription, call 305-264-7111. Cancellations should be made as early as possible but at least one hour before the scheduled pickup time. Be sure to indicate if you are canceling the initial pickup and/or the return trip. Canceling your initial pickup may result in automatic cancellation of your return trip unless you are very specific. Cancellations which are received less than one hour before the scheduled pickup time may be considered a "No-Show." Riders with abusive no-show rates may receive written warnings and service suspensions.

Cancellations are very costly to the STS program. Before placing a

reservation be certain that you really plan to travel. Excessive cancellations are an abuse of the STS Program and will be investigated by the Project Office staff.

No-Show Policy

If you reserve service and decide not to travel, you must call to cancel your service at least one hour before your requested travel time or your record will be marked "No-Show." If a rider is a "No Show" on the going trip, the return trip will automatically be cancelled unless the rider calls to advise.

A "No-Show" rider is one who places a request for service but does not meet his/her ride upon its arrival. On the first occasion, an STS staff member will contact you by phone to remind you of the "No-Show" policy.

On the second occurrence, you will be mailed a WARNING that you are in violation of the program rules again. Continued abuse of STS service may result in fines, suspension, or termination of STS transportation privileges.

Pickups

The STS vehicle will pick up the rider 10 minutes before to 20 minutes after the negotiated pickup time. Be prepared to leave when the vehicle

arrives. Riders must carry their STS identification card when traveling with STS.

Remember that other STS riders may ride in the same vehicle with you, or the vehicle may be scheduled to pick up another passenger right after you reach your destination. Your punctuality is required as a courtesy to other STS riders.

The driver will:

- Collect the exact fare when you are picked up. Drivers do not make change. NOTE: If you prefer not to carry cash, call STS at 305-265-3302 to purchase fare vouchers. Vouchers can be given to the driver in lieu of cash fare.
- Upon request, the driver will assist the rider from the main entrance door at the pick-up location to the vehicle and from the vehicle to the main entrance door at the scheduled destination.
- Ask you to sign the driver's manifest or trip ticket, which indicates the actual time you were picked up and the dollar amount of the fare paid.
IMPORTANT: You should review the trip ticket information carefully and be sure it is correct before you sign. Report discrepancies to the STS Program Office at 305-267-6305.

County staff will investigate all discrepancies and complaints.

Free-Fare Program

Certified STS riders can use Metrobus, Metrorail, and Metromover free of charge by simply showing their STS picture identification card to the bus operator or rail security officer. Elevators are available at every Metrorail station. To use Metromover, simply pick up the blue passenger-assist phone, and the staff at Central Control will allow you to enter the station. Your decision to use public transportation at times is encouraged by Miami-Dade Transit and will not jeopardize your STS privileges in any way. To plan your public transit trip, call 305-770-3131 or 305-891-3131, if you live south of SW 216 Street (TTY/TDD 305-654-6530). An information agent will help identify the best route(s) to reach your destination.

Fare Structure

Effective September 1, 2001 the base STS fare for ADA-eligible riders is \$2.50 per one-way trip. Companions pay the same \$2.50 base fare as the certified rider. The Personal Care Attendant (PCA) travels free but must be pre-approved by the STS Certification Office as part of the rider's permanent certification record.

The \$2.50 base fare falls under the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 which stipulates that fares charged for shared-ride complementary paratransit services be no more than twice the regular public transportation fare. The current Miami-Dade Transit base fare is \$1.25 plus 25 cents for any transfer required.

Service Hours

STS operates seven days a week. The earliest available pickup is at 4:30 a.m. and the latest possible drop-off time is at 2:30 a.m. the following day.

Late Vehicle Assistance

If your ride has not arrived 20 minutes after the negotiated pickup time, call the contractor's late vehicle assistance line at 305-264-7111. If your problem is not resolved, call the County at 305-267-6305. County staff may dispatch a backup vehicle if the primary contractor is unable to fulfill service commitments. However, neither the County nor the contractor will reimburse taxi fares should the rider call a taxi on their own.

Passenger Assistance Policies

STS drivers will assist you to and from the vehicle. This includes a steadying arm when walking and

assistance in getting your wheelchair to and from the main door of the building entrance.

If you need assistance in getting to and from your wheelchair or walker into a vehicle, or from the vehicle to your wheelchair or walker, the driver will hold the chair or walker steady for you but cannot lift you. If riding in a sedan your wheelchair or walker will be stored in the trunk of the vehicle while traveling. Drivers will help carry up to two bags, but no driver may go beyond the threshold of your home or beyond the main entrance of any public building.

Miami-Dade Transit is responsible for:

- Resolving rider concerns.
- Monitoring contracted service provider performance.
- Certifying and registering eligible applicants.
- Communicating program changes to passengers.

To assist the County in continuing to deliver quality service and at the same time keep program costs within approved budget limitations, your assistance is required. By adhering to the STS Program Rules contained in this guide, you will be helping us continue to provide the disabled

community with this important transportation service.

Call Miami-Dade Transit if:

- You have a recurring problem with late vehicles.
- Your ride is unsafe.
- You are treated rudely.
- Your STS vehicle is in poor or unsafe condition. This includes wheelchair restraints, seat belts, lifts or ramps, and cleanliness.
- You are a wheelchair rider transported facing sideways. The ADA requires forward and/or backward securement using 4-point tie-downs, shoulder and lap belts.
- You are injured or involved in an accident while using this service.

Resolving a service problem

Miami-Dade Transit is responsible for quickly and efficiently resolving service problems. If you have a complaint or compliment about this service, a driver, or a provider, please e-mail your comments at www.miamidade.gov/transit. Click the Comments & Suggestions or Complaints & Concerns link in the left column, complete the form, and click the "Submit" button. Or call the STS Complaint Officer at 305-267-6305. You can also write to:

**Miami-Dade Transit
Special Transportation Service
2775 SW 74 Avenue, 2nd Floor
Miami, Florida 33155**

Complaints should be reported to the County Complaint Officer on the date that the incident occurs or on the very next business day after the incident. Every complaint will be investigated.

When your complaint is filed, the County will:

- Record the problem's description.
- Research the complaint.
- Require that the contracted service provider respond to the County within 10-20 calendar days from the provider's receipt of your complaint.
- Work with the provider to solve the problem.
- Notify you of complaint resolution.

To assist us in researching your complaint, it is important to report the complaint as soon as possible, while the details are still clear. The following information is needed:

- Date and time of incident
- Name of rider
- Identification number
- Phone number

- Address
- Trip destination
- Description of vehicle and/or vehicle number
- Driver name (if possible)
- Scheduled pickup time
- Actual pickup time
- Details of the incident

Recurring problems are referred to the STS Program Manager. If a provider fails to comply with the agreed upon solution to the problem, the STS Program Manager will then recommend appropriate penalties against the contracted service provider.

If you are not satisfied with the County's resolution of your service problem, you may contact the State's Transportation Disadvantaged Helpline at 1-800-983-2435.

Important reminders:

- Book trips at least one day in advance, preferably between noon and 2 p.m.
- Have your identification number and accurate information and directions ready to give to the call-taker when making your reservation request.
- Give specifics to help the driver find you at the pickup location. This is particularly important at large

medical facilities, colleges, and shopping centers.

- Write down the reservation or cancellation confirmation number given to you by the call-taker. This information will assist us to help you should you experience a problem.
- Call 305-263-5406 to advise of any changes such as address, telephone number, disability status, etc., so that we may keep your transportation record current.
- Tipping is not permitted.
- Pets are not permitted in the vehicle, except guide dogs for people who are visually impaired, or service animals specially trained to assist riders with disabilities.
- Guide dogs travel inside the vehicle with their owner and will be considered a rider when determining vehicle capacity. Guide dogs are not permitted to sit on the seats and must sit on the floor during transit.
- Whenever possible, try to travel between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. when traffic conditions are better.

Summary of ADA Grievance Procedure

Any Miami-Dade Transit customer who believes that service on Metrobus, Metrorail, Metromover, or STS does not comply with the Americans with

Disabilities Act (ADA) may file a grievance by writing to:

Miami-Dade Transit,
Office of Civil Rights
111 NW First Street, Suite 910
Miami, Florida 33128-1999

Your grievance should include sufficient detail to research and respond to your concern. Be sure to include your name, address, daytime phone number, date of incident, time of day, location and description of the problem. If you require a response in an accessible format - large print, Braille, audio tape or computer diskette (ASCII) - please specify the preferred format.

A preliminary determination of whether or not an ADA violation exists and, if so, what actions have been or will be taken to correct the problem, will be sent to the customer within 30 calendar days of receipt. MDT customers are protected under the ADA and are free to file a grievance without fear of retaliation. For a copy of the ADA grievance procedure, please call 305-375-1839.

STS Group Meetings

The County conducts a monthly STS rider meeting to provide riders with the latest STS program and policy information. The meetings are

currently held on the first Tuesday of the month between 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. If you are interested in attending, call 305-263-5400 to confirm the date, time and location of the next meeting.

Hurricane Evacuation Planning

When the county manager issues an evacuation order, STS will try to provide certified riders with a one-way trip to a shelter. STS will not provide shopping trips during an emergency. Riders should stock medications and supplies well in advance of hurricane season. STS will stop operating when winds reach 40 miles per hour. The Hurricane Answer Center is activated during emergency situations to answer your questions including public shelter openings. The Answer Center may be contacted at 305-468-5900.

Evacuate early! Don't wait!

If you need to evacuate, plan to seek shelter with family or friends who live inland. Remember that public evacuation centers are uncomfortable and crowded and are intended as a last resort for people who have no other place to go during a storm.

If you plan to go to a public evacuation center and need assistance with daily living because of a medical condition or disability, contact the

Miami-Dade Office of Emergency Management to register for a Special Needs Center. This program offers transportation and is available to STS and non-STS certified persons. To register, call the Miami-Dade Office of Emergency Management, Emergency Evacuation Assistance Registry at 305-513-7700 (TTY/TDD, 305-468-5402).

County Telephone Numbers:

STS Certification/Enrollment Office and Information (M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)305-263-5406

TTY/TDD (hearing impaired)
.305-263-5459

STS Project Office and Administration (M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
.305-263-5400

Late Vehicle Assistance (24 hours)
.305-267-6305

TTY/TDD (hearing impaired)
.305-263-5475

Complaints/Commendations (M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) 305-267-6305

TTY/TDD (hearing impaired) . . . 305-263-5475

Toll-Free number. . . 1-888-543-4822

Transit Information . . .305-770-3131

For information on bus, rail and mover (M-F, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. & S-S, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Transit information for residents South of SW 216 St. . .305-891-3131

TTY/TDD (hearing impaired)
.305-654-6530

Contractor Telephone Numbers:

Reservations (Daily, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)305-264-9000

Subscriptions (M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
.305-265-3337

Cancellations (24 hours.)305-264-7111

Late Vehicle Assistance (24 hours)305-264-7111

TTY/TDD (24 hours) (hearing impaired) . . . 305-265-9435

If calling from outside Miami-Dade County (24 hours) 1-888-305-RIDE

Administration & Voucher Purchase (M-F, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.) 305-265-3300

This Rider's Guide is available from:

Miami-Dade Transit

Special Transportation Service
2775 S.W. 74 Ave., Second Floor
Miami, FL 33155

Transit Information Center
Government Center Metrorail Station
Second Level

You can read and/or print this publication from our website at:
www.miamidade.gov/transit

Copies are also available in Braille, ASCII file, large print, and audio cassette for the visually impaired.

Notes

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Alex Penelas
Mayor

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